

Useful Information

Parish Registers

www.ancestry.co.uk

www.findmypast.co.uk

www.lans-opc.org.uk

The Genealogist

www.thegenealogist.co.uk/researchguide/?cid=1&p=100

Archives +

www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_history/464/church_register_list

Family Search

www.familysearch.org/search/collection/igi

Dr Williams Library

www.dwlib.co.uk/dwlib/family/registers.html

The National Archives

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/researchguides/nonconformists.htm

The Official Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial BMDs Service

www.bmdregisters.co.uk

Lancashire Archives

Roman Catholic

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=4528&pageid=30846

Non Conformist

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=4528&pageid=30845&e=e

For more detailed information:

www.mlfhs.org.uk/guides

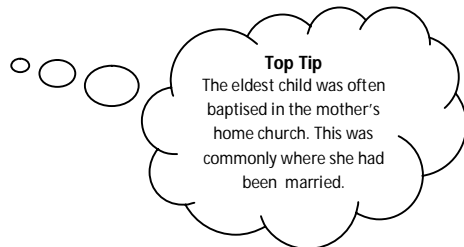
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Archives +



Parish Registers

A parish register records the details of baptisms, marriages and burials within the established church. The register was traditionally stored in a locked chest in church for safekeeping, though in more recent times these registers can be found deposited in a county record office or local archive.

How can they help?

Parish records can assist you in order to trace your family back further than the Census allows or Civil Registration documents which were introduced in 1837. Also, the parish records can provide supporting and detailed evidence for research gathered post 1837.

Why were these records kept?

It became compulsory in September 1538 that every church must keep its own weekly record of baptism, marriages and burials. This provided parishioners with proof of age, parentage, rights of inheritance, and could be used to establish if a person was a native born subject of the monarch.

Where can I find the Parish Registers?

Many of the original registers have now been microfilmed as they are so delicate. These are available to view at local archives, county record offices or local studies libraries. Also, copies of registers that are still in existence and have been microfilmed are available through the LDS Church at their Family History Libraries across the country. These are available to view for a small fee. However, many parish registers have now been digitised and can be found on several different online pay per view websites. More and more parish registers are becoming available online all the time, so it is worth checking back occasionally to see if a particular set of parish registers is online. Remember to check the individual websites to see exactly which parishes their database covers.

Finding Individuals

- You will need to know or have some idea what religion your ancestor was likely to be in order to start your search in the parish registers.
- You are unlikely to trace whole families through the same parish register, people moved around even if only to the next parish or may have migrated many miles away. Some may even have changed their religion through the generations.
- Always search a broad period when looking for baptisms so that you may be able to pick up siblings of your ancestor.
- Look at local maps and study the registers of parishes within walking distance of your ancestors home if you are unable to locate a baptism, marriage or burial at a given church.
- Don't forget to look for burials of your ancestors. They will complete the story of a person's life, and may tell you how old they were or manner of death. A burial may mark the end of one marriage and then provide a date of the availability of the surviving partner to marry again. The register may indicate where the deceased came from or provide a place of residence. Date of burial may prompt you to look for a will, or grant of administration for further information.
- Look carefully - some of the records may be written in Latin or even a local dialect depending on date and location of the registers. Spellings may be archaic and differ from the modern version or you may find spelling inconsistencies and non-standard grammar with phonetic spelling often used.
- When doing a computerised search try using spellings variants or be creative with your search methods if your initial search does not produce any results.

Roman Catholic Registers

As a result of a statute of 1606, Catholics were obliged to be baptised and buried by the Church of England or fined. Children of Catholic landowners were usually publically baptised in the Established Church in order to protect their right of inheritance after having been baptised privately according to their own rights. Many Catholic registers are still in the hands of the individual churches, though a small number with entries running up to 1837 were deposited with the Registrar General. Always check the Anglican parish registers for any Catholic ancestors as some will appear in both .

Non-Conformist Registers

Non-Conformists were people who did not belong to the Established Church and from 1559 this was the Anglican Church (Church of England). Non-Conformists include Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, Catholics and Unitarians. Depending on the date you are looking for individuals who were not members of the Established Church may not be detailed in the Parish Church records. Therefore, it will be more difficult for you to obtain information. It is always useful to look in the parish registers first but you will also need to look at the Non-Conformist Registers in order to find possible details of Non-Conformist baptisms, marriages and burials.

Large numbers of nonconformist registers were collected by the General Register Office in 1837 and again in 1857 and are now kept at The National Archives. These records are available to view on the BMD Registers website (£).

This collection contains mainly birth and baptism registers. There are only a few marriage registers in these collections as between 1754 and 1837 only Church of England marriages were legal. However, Quakers were exempt from this law and you should find Quaker records exclusively within The National Archives RG6 collection and also the BMD Registers website. Prior to the 1850's the vast majority of burials were recorded in the parish registers of the Church of England and so are not contained in this collection.